

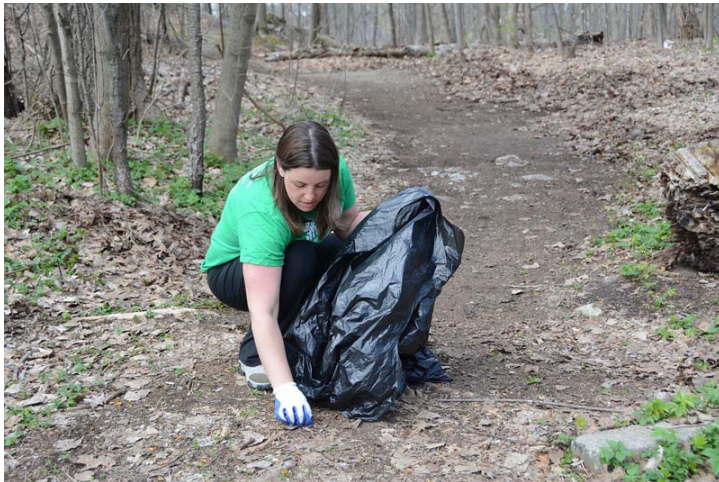
# The Berkshire Eagle

## Dozens of volunteers help clean up Fred Garner, Springside parks

*By Phil Demers*

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Darcie Sosa, a volunteer, picks up trash along the trails during the Friends of Springside Park's 27th annual Spring Cleanup for Earth Day on Saturday April 23, 2016. Gillian Jones — The Berkshire Eagle | [photos.berkshireeagle.com](http://photos.berkshireeagle.com)



From left, Bob Patterson, Donald Miller, 11, and Mark Miller bring trash out from along the trails and grounds during the Friends of Springside Park's 27th annual Spring Cleanup for Earth Day on Saturday April 23, 2016. Gillian Jones — The Berkshire Eagle |



Some of the trash picked up by volunteers during the Friends of Springside Park's 27th annual Spring Cleanup for Earth Day on Saturday April 23, 2016. Gillian Jones — The Berkshire Eagle | [photos.berkshireeagle.com](http://photos.berkshireeagle.com)

**PITTSFIELD** — More than 100 total volunteers turned out for a little spring cleaning outside the house on Saturday, leaving Fred Garner and Springside parks a whole lot nicer than they found them.

Springside Park cleanups occur twice a year and enjoy a crowd of faithful regular participants — the activity at Fred Garner, on the other hand, was brand new.

Participants brought a festival-like atmosphere to the park — the event was called an Earth Day River Festival — with a hot dog stand and scavenger hunts and other events for kids.

"When we were leaving there, a family was enjoying a picnic, their kids running around, and no trash in site," Jane Winn of Berkshire Environmental Action Team said.

BEAT sponsored the event alongside Housatonic Valley Association, whose 149-mile, Source to Sound Housatonic River adventure started in Washington on Friday. The trip covers every navigable stretch of the river in 26 sections, and continues through May 1. On Sunday from 1 to 3 p.m., a Source to Sound themed event will take place on Lee Athletic Field.

"We got a lot of good stuff done today," Alison Dixon, HVA Berkshire outreach program manager, said. "It was amazing how big the pile of trash we cleaned up was. We even pulled a keg that had not been opened out of the river."

Around 50 people participated, including a number of Berkshire Community College students.

"We want to make it bigger and better in future years," Dixon said.

The Housatonic Valley watershed includes 2,000 square miles of land stretching from western Massachusetts through western Connecticut and eastern New York to Long Island Sound.

Meanwhile, at Springside, roughly 80 volunteers amassed mattresses, toy slides, tires, all kinds of sporting balls, plastic, styrofoam and much more, packed away into several truckloads of debris.



Audrey Allard, 9, and her mom, Sabrina, pick up trash Saturday in the playground, during the Friends of Springside Park's 27th annual Spring Cleanup for Earth Day. (Gillian Jones — The Berkshire Eagle | [photos.berkshireeagle.com](http://photos.berkshireeagle.com))

"The park's in really great shape," Royal Hartigan, co-founder of Friends of Springside Park and cleanup participant, said. "I would say it's 90 to 95 percent clean."

He added, "Every year we notice it gets better and better. When you have a clean park, it ceases to seem like a dumping ground, so you don't get people dumping. The general progress has been steady and easy to see."

James McGrath, Pittsfield Open Space and Natural Resource Program Manager, agreed.

"The city is very appreciative of the efforts of the Springside Park Conservancy and the many volunteers who come out annually for these cleanups," McGrath said. "Their efforts are noticeable. We're seeing a lot less debris throughout the park and it appears that stewardship of the park is on the rise."

Contact Phil Demers at 413-496-6214.



Volunteers check in and out Saturday during the Friends of Springside Park's 27th annual Spring Cleanup for Earth Day. (Gillian Jones — The Berkshire Eagle | [photos.berkshireeagle.com](http://photos.berkshireeagle.com))